



Herefordshire Equality and Human Rights Conference Review

3 November 2010

Aims of the day

- To launch the Herefordshire Equality & Human Rights Charter
- To show how supporting and promoting human rights helps to challenge hate crime and build community cohesion

Background to the Herefordshire Equality and Human Rights Charter

The charter is the result of working with Local Government Improvement and Development and the British Institute of Human Rights. Herefordshire is one of 5 pilot projects looking at how human rights can help local authorities and public bodies improve services. It is intended to take human rights out of the courtroom and into the complex and diverse world in which public services operate. We believe that we have both a moral and statutory obligation to reflect the needs of our diverse population when providing and procuring services and when employing people. In developing the charter we recognise that inequality is caused by the way in which society fails to meet an individual's needs, and this charter sets out our commitment to take positive steps to eliminate discrimination in our policies, practice and procedures, and empower individuals to take control of their lives, and to live independently.

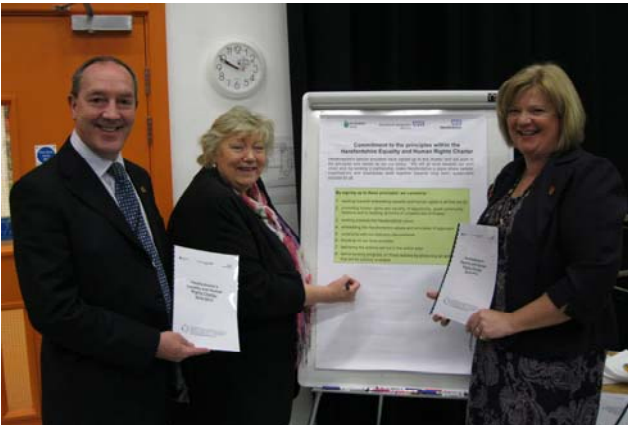
What did delegates say about the event?

It was a positive day with over 50% of the delegates filling in evaluation forms. 42 returned; 32 of which said good or excellent; 9 okay; 1 not very good

- “it challenged my current thinking and possible apathy towards community cohesion. The session has led me to question and follow up with research”
- “Good cross-section of community represented”
- “people willing to talk and question, and sharing experiences”
- “showed how seriously people take these issues”
- “I learnt a lot, real examples helped to bring things to life”
- “excellent – inspiring!”
- “Good to see that this is happening”
- “Good outline of local priorities and how they link to universal/national/legal commitments and a good call to ACT!!”

Presentations

Councillor June French (Deputy Leader of the Council and lead member for equalities) and Dean Taylor (Deputy Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire) opened the event.



Dean Taylor, Cllr Mrs June French, and Carol Trachonitis sign up to the charter

Hannah Clayton **British Institute of Human Rights**

Hannah spoke about bringing Human Rights to life and embedding a Human Rights approach in all that we do. Hannah gave some practical examples of how a Human Rights approach can be applied.

Carol Trachonitis **Equality and Diversity Manager,** **Herefordshire Council**

Carol spoke about why we have the charter, Herefordshire's local priorities and how we have agreed to work together. The charter sets out the principles, ethos and values by which we will work and sets out the legal framework to ensure compliance with our statutory duties.

Neville Meredith **Race Equality and Community Cohesion** **Officer, Herefordshire Council**

Neville talked about how community cohesion and Human Rights are linked. "a cohesive community is one where there is a strong sense of individual rights and responsibilities and people from all backgrounds feel empowered to invoke their rights."

Lara Latcham **Manager of the Kindle Centre**

Lara informed delegates about activities at the Kindle Centre which work as a community cohesion tool. The building is managed by the South Wye Development Trust, an organisation that was set up in 2006 to deliver regeneration work in South Wye. The Kindle Centre was set up in business with the twin aims of sustainability and, with time, the ability to create a profit, which can be reinvested into the South Wye community. Kindle is working with the community and for the community to provide resources such as hall space, meeting rooms, Internet access, activities for young people and a business support service.

Ishrat Karim **Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council**

Ishrat spoke about how play projects in Dudley have brought people together and instilled a sense of pride in the areas that have been revamped as part of the scheme. The play areas improved have resulted in adults and children of many different backgrounds meeting and coming together. In particular, the Sycamore Adventure Centre funded by the project. This indoor and outdoor play facility is set in the middle of the most

Presentations

deprived area in the city, but attracts people from other areas.

After lunch the sessions looked specifically at hate crime and the impact that this has on our communities and how a human rights based approach can help us tackle these issues.

Neville Meredith

“PUSH OFF!” – this was Neville’s rather challenging opening statement to a talk about hate crime in Herefordshire. People in the audience shared their experiences of hate crime and of the police’s handling of such cases. “I felt this was the perfect opportunity to open the debate about how hate crime destroys the lives of families. Very few people are aware of the damage being caused by hate crime and even in the most cohesive of communities families will be going through this pain” said Neville.

Barbara Lloyd Adult Safeguarding Manager

Barbara spoke about what constitutes a “vulnerable adult” and how the safeguarding procedure could be used to help people experiencing hate crime. Barbara also informed delegates about the “no wrong door” initiative.

Colin Chapman Chief Crown Prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in West Mercia

Colin gave an informative talk about hate crime from the CPS’s point of view. He also spoke about how cases are brought and the judiciary process. Colin assured the audience that the CPS are willing to go to court with hate crime cases. He explained that the hate crime element is an aggravating factor which is taken into

account at the sentencing stage. Colin also explained some of the other offences which hate crime is associated with, for example, public order offences and assault.

Paul Choppen and Alison Peel Learning Disability Partnership Board

Paul and Alison talked about the importance of remote reporting centres for people with learning disabilities and how we might set this up in Herefordshire. Paul and Alison will now take this idea to the Valuing People Partnership Board and start making remote reporting centres a reality.

How was the event funded?

The event cost approximately £1,000. Funding came from the former Herefordshire Equality Partnership. The Herefordshire Equality Partnership no longer exists in the form of formal meetings but has left a legacy for community cohesion projects to be run in the county.

Delegates were asked to sign up to the charter in a personal capacity and 55 of the 80 that attended made the commitment.





More information about the day

Key Points from the day

- From the discussions it was agreed that Herefordshire would set up a hate crime panel to address some of the issues that were raised in the session.
- Many other organisations are looking at signing up to the charter in the future.
- The day helped delegates have a better understanding of Human Rights throughout the county.
- Delegates went away with the knowledge of how to embed Human Rights in their day-to-day practice.
- Delegates should now have a better understanding of hate crime and community cohesion in the county.

What could we have done better?

Delegates told us that:

- there should have been a delegate list in the delegate packs or name badges to better enable networking between delegates.
- opportunities for open discussion were limited and many delegates wanted to share their own personal experiences.
- more time for questions and an open debate about some of the issues raised

How many people attended?

All day 60

Morning session only 12

Afternoon session only 8

Total delegates 80

Where were the delegates from?

Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire
 Sheltered Housing for Young People Project (SHYPP)
 Affinity Trust
 Age Concern Herefordshire and Worcestershire
 People's Advocacy
 Crown Prosecution Service
 West Mercia Police
 Hereford Access for All
 ifacilitate
 Shelter
 Marches Housing
 British Institute of Human Rights
 The Alliance
 The Rural Media Company
 Kemble Housing
 Kindle Centre
 Herefordshire Disability Forum
 ECHO
 Leominster Friendship Centre
 The Beaumont Society
 Amey Wye Valley
 West Midlands Housing
 Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue
 MIND